

11 Minutes with Germaine Greer

An interview with the author of "The Female Eunuch"



How does your view of women's liberation differ from Kate Millett's and the others?

I don't think my concept of the movement differs very much. The problem is rather that we're dealing with an extremely widely based movement - we're not drawing our recruits from only one part of the community, for example we're not dealing with workers in the factory who can be easily unified and easily communicated with, we're dealing with women who are lifting up their heads and looking about them and seeing different things. Some of them expect something like therapy, self help, aid in a present situation which they find oppressive.

Some come into it hoping for constitutional or political action to get their rights in specific instances: for instance, women working in universities who know they're going to be sacked, things of that sort. Then there are women who are already convinced Marxists who have come into the movement from the S.D.S., Maoist women and others like that who numerically are probably quite a small part of the movement.

The problem then is to unify something as disparate as that and it's not happening, to the naked eye, at present: the divisions seem to be happening more strikingly than the unifications. But I think there's hope even in that because the natural tendency of the movement seems to be to the Left. Even the reformist organizations - when they've actually been about trying to get their reforms for a while - seem to have become more revolutionary. They seem to realize that the existing political structure is not able to provide the kind of liberty and the kind of guarantees that women require.

There's no way, for example, of instituting an adequate system of day care under what passes for democracy

because there's just not that kind of priority in the budget - they're more interested in defence spending or what we would call 'aggression spending' and things of that sort. So it becomes a battle against the whole structure of western politics and this seems to be happening in England, in America and probably in Canada as well.

So the movement even at its broadest base, is becoming radicalized. Somebody like Betty Friedan is more radical now than she was when she wrote *The Feminine Mystique* just by virtue of having confronted the political organizations and having discovered how they work.

If we put up a significant number of female candidates for the U.S. primaries this year - which I think is being attempted - then we'll find out even more of how things work - how big business puts money behind certain candidates and if you haven't got that kind of power you have no political representation. It'll be costly and I imagine we'll lose a lot of candidates and we may even get a few token candidates but it won't make any difference to the state of affairs.

But what we're praying will not happen is that the women's candidates and the black candidates be pitted against one another at the Democratic convention this summer; but I think that's absolutely inevitable so I think we should try to prepare for that situation and try to short-circuit it before it develops.

Is commitment to women's lib necessarily political commitment?

I think it is. I've been blamed (as a result of the book) for throwing too much of the blame on the individual woman herself; the reason I do that is that

I am an anarchist and I believe in participatory politics in which people's decision-making faculties are called into account - they have to make decisions which affect themselves and not simply transfer them to somebody who's under pressure of all kinds from different interests to make decisions of one kind or another. You might gather from that, for instance, that the United States is just too big to function in a democratic way.

How can you be an anarchist and still be a member of a group?

Anarchists aren't individualists. It's strange: I noticed in the States, when I was at the Washington conference, that when one spoke of freedom, one understood individualism which is not the same thing at all.

We're free to recognize our common interests with other people in the same sort of situation. And what you want is cooperation rather than coercion. Well, just about all circumstances I know of proceed by coercion rather than cooperation. For example, if I stand up with a class learning at different paces, as a teacher does all the time, I've got to slow down the fast ones and speed up the slow ones so that we can get on with our work in an orderly way. Now if I was able to teach cooperatively, which I'm not, I could then ask the fast children to help the slow children - the classroom might be much noisier and the headmistress might come down and say 'Miss Greer, you really can't have that much noise in your class' - but I bet that the kids would learn much quicker and everybody would be less bored. In my case at school, I spent two years listening to other kids learning to read when I could have helped them because I was a fast reader. So it's not that I can't

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A pitch for co-ops

co
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be part of a group; it's a matter of my not allowing the group to be taken over by this form of perpendicular authority. We should all have equal authority and we should act because we know it's a good idea.

How do you reach consensus?

It's not quite the same as consensus. That's come up in some of the women's groups — that they feel over-organized and beaten because they're not very good at expressing themselves and not good at arguing political points. So we were thinking that it might be a good idea to have a group with a president but with an 'anti-president' as well. Everything the president wanted to do would be specifically debated by her opponent, so that it would then be forwarded for universal approbation by the group; since one action must be right and the other wrong. It takes patience. One of the problems is that the women who are adroit politically go too fast for some of the other women, so we tend to lose them. But these are the people

For years students have complained about the exorbitant cost of books, the high cost of housing in the downtown area, the high cost of food. All in all, the high cost of living. If you're a day student and you are self-sufficient, (i.e. your parents or the government is supporting you while you're studying) then you probably don't care about the costs of being a student. If you're the type of student who has to barely make ends meet each week, then you know what the costs of being a student are like. If you're an evening student who wants to get "a degree" so that you can advance and increase your pay check, you know what the high cost of living is doing to you.

Let's face it, it's an economic reality that we're living in a period of inflation and high unemployment. It is quite un-

letters

likely that the economic situation shall improve in the near future. What are we going to do about it?

Required texts that cost \$10.00 last year in most cases were increased to \$11.50. Has your pay-check increased?

The Co-Op realized the economic difficulties that were going to affect most students. For that reason we attempted a Used Book Sale, where students would be able to save some money.

However, the economic problems do not disappear by saving some money on books. We, the students, 17,500 in all (5,900 day students, 11,600 evening students) have a tremendous potential for improving the economic situation as it affects us.

How?

Most of the services (housing, books, food, etc.) we utilize operate on a "surplus" profit basis. In other words, they mark-up their prices so to maximize their profits. However, if we, the students, owned these services then we the students would maximize the profits.

How?

On paper the answer appears quite simple; however, in reality it may be something else. However, let's give it a chance.

An alternative to high prices, and maximization of profits by private entrepreneurs is to form Co-Ops.

Look, there are 17,500 students at Sir George. If each student were to deposit \$1.00 weekly in the Co-Op, the Co-Op would have a weekly budget of \$17,500. With that dollar deposit, the student becomes a member of the Co-Op and is entitled to all the benefits of the Co-Op (i.e. deciding where the money is to be spent, on which projects, working within the Co-Op, and obtaining all benefits from the reductions on all products). For example, if the Co-Op should order books from a publisher at \$7.50 the only increase would be to meet overhead. How much will overhead be? That information will be available to all members, for any increase cost must be justified to the membership.

Further, if every student deposited \$1.00 a week for an entire year the Co-Op would have an operating budget of \$70,000 monthly or \$840,000 yearly. With this capital, we would allocate the funds to meet our requirements, be they housing, food, books, clothing or any demand that requires immediate action.

However, if members decide that they cannot benefit from the Co-Op their deposit plus interest will be returned.

In a sense the Co-Op is attempting to inaugurate a "student business" where the students invest in a Co-Op and thereby become its owners.

We have numerous day to day socio-economic problems. Why not work together to solve these difficulties? The Co-Op extends the following invitation to you. Join and let's work together. Let's get adequate student housing, let's form a food co-op etc. There will be an open meeting of the Co-Op Thursday, October 28, 1971 at 6:30 P.M. in Room H-651 mixed lounge, and a general meeting Saturday, October 30, 1971 at 10:30 A.M. in Room H-333-3.

Co-operatists Club
Sir George Williams University

COMPETITION

Results of competition numbers 4 and 5 will be published next week. The competition has been discontinued.



the action is all for so we really can't afford to lose them.

Is women's liberation middle class?

I suppose it has a largely middle class construction, but then society seems to be largely middle class as well. The middle class is the most politically inert by some extraordinary mistake. It is the middle class housewife who is the most disenfranchised and the most in need of the movement. But I've been struggling to pick up the working class section of the movement because they're very important. The black woman in the ghetto bringing up her children knows the hard realities of life, and I would like to draw on her wisdom. As it happens, she's too often repelled by the 'la-di-da' aspects of the movement.

These are problems which we have to face. We have no coherence as a group at all; we don't even have any art forms that women can call their own because they've been submerged. We have women's magazines which are mostly owned by men and usually filled with rubbish.

Nationalism and the Canadian University

Henry Beissel,
English

One's most immediate response to the idea of introducing nationalist criteria into the operations of our universities is negative. We all share some notion that universities are concerned with 'eternal human verities': the pursuit of truth and knowledge, after all, is universal. Even on reflection one might legitimately wonder what relevance citizenship has to the hiring of university faculty, or nationality to the curricula and the teaching of the Arts and Sciences. Indeed, many academics declare that both are irrelevant and that the only true criterion is excellence — and excellence (they claim) is more or less international, global, well-nigh absolute.

It has been fashionable among intellectuals, parroting McLuhan's epitome of the 'global village', to avow that nationalism is passé, a 19th-century phenomenon taken seriously only by reactionaries. Villagers being notoriously well informed about the realities in each others' houses and lives, if our intellectuals really lived in a 'global village' they would, instead of championing ill-informed pseudo-avant-gardisms, realize that we have only just entered the age of nationalism. What they describe as 'nationalism' and belonging to 19th century, is in reality imperialism — a chauvinist megalomania bent on territorial and commercial expansion, usually accompanied by delusions of messianic grandeur. Soviet Russia and the United States, each in her own way, are perhaps the most prominent last bastions of that kind of chauvinism, still powerful, but (I hope) in the process of being eclipsed, because historically passé.

If 19th-century imperialist nationalism is passing, it is because of the emergence of a new kind of nationalist, one who does not seek to occupy other countries but occupies himself with the internal affairs of his own country, one who does not wish to take over foreign industries and manipulate other nations' economies but insists on controlling his own economy and working out the destiny of his own people, one who is not obsessed with his own superiority and determined to impose his way and philosophy of life on others but who knows in the marrow of his bones that his own nation is different and unique, like other nations, neither better nor worse, and who struggles for the freedom to make that unique difference manifest culturally, politically, economically, socially in the life of his nation, without ever losing sight of his solidarity with all men.

For Canada as a whole it is inevitable, given our special historical and geographical circumstances, that the new nationalism should be defensive against the U.S., that flamboyant brother of ours who made it big and who has been patronizing us ever since. 66% of our total economy is U.S.-owned; in our vital industries the figure is above 90%. Economic control means political power. A branch plant economy requires and produces a branch plant culture. Thus U.S. authority filters into our social order and into our daily lives. Add the impact of U.S. radio and TV, magazines, textbooks and publishing generally, and now the influx of U.S. professors — is it not reasonable, in view of all this, to be concerned over the survival of a Canadian culture and nation?

If my argument on the new nationalism stands, and if we do decide to be Cana-

dians, then it is easy to see that our institutions of learning and professional training centres are paramount in transmitting our own values and perspectives.

Part of the function of any national literature is to help the community from which it arose understand itself, by articulating its innermost drives, impulses, frustrations, by projecting the reality of its conduct and its conflicts, by delineating the dimensions of its quest. In the process of thus examining the social order and the psyche literature helps give meaning and direction to the life and times of the community as a whole. Canadian literatures does that for Canadians and that is why it should be taught at Canadian schools and universities. And this teaching should not be relegated to 'Institutes of Canadian Studies', but it should be an essential and self-evident part of all English, French, and general literature programs. The existence of 'Institutes of Canadian Studies' is an insult to Canadians because they signify an acceptance of the extent to which we have been colonialized. Who has ever heard of an 'Institute of French Studies' in France? Or how about an 'Institute of Russian Studies' in Russia?

More important than Canadian content, or at least as important, are Canadian values and perspectives. The fact is that the 'eternal human verities' which universities are supposedly concerned with are so banal, and mostly biological, that they are best settled in a tavern or a whorehouse. What we study at university are the infinite interrelations of an infinite variety of phenomena in the world: flowers and machines, poems and diseases, laws, neutrons, treaties, minds, pumpkins and cave paintings — their nature and significance, elusive often and contradictory, shifting forever in the flow of time and relative to the physical and intellectual place of the observer. The assumption of universal objectivity on the part of some academics is just so much pomposity. Beyond the convenience of certain conventions of logic and an effort at disinterestedness, all is subjectivity in the Humanities, beginning with the selection of the object of study, the critical perspectives you bring to bear, the choice of evidence, all the way to the values by which you assess the results of your analysis or study. That's why we are still in business. If it were otherwise, everything that could be said about *Hamlet* or the French Revolution would already have been said. But it hasn't. And I suggest it never will have been said.

Since the personal and cultural subjectivity by which we study and teach embodies the values, perspectives and traditions of the community from which it emerges, Canadian culture can survive only if our entire educational system is unambiguously controlled and operated by a clear majority of Canadians. I am not suggesting that taking out Canadian citizenship will change a man's temperament. I am equating it with a real commitment to the country which will change his perspectives.

The argument presupposes of course that there really are significant differences between the values and assumptions north and south of the 49th parallel. Those living to the south and crossing to the north of it usually find no real difference, whereas those living to the north and crossing to the south of it usually do —

and that in itself is a significant difference, however one explains it. It goes well with the idea of divine appointment which informs U.S. politics and life, its notions of the goodness of natural man, the dream of creating the City of God between California and New York State and then redeeming all mankind. We Canadians do not hold such grandiose convictions. We are the product not of a revolution but of two emigrations, one from the motherland, the other from below the 49th parallel. We do not believe in the perfectibility of man, and life is for us an *Odyssey* rather than a quest for the Holy Grail. This difference is fundamental and informs every facet of our cultural, political and social existence. It makes us more conservative and more unadventurous than our southern neighbour, more dull perhaps and slow, but also more level-headed, more obstinate, and in our own smug way more humble. There is much debate and disagreement about the Canadian identity. As far as I am concerned, we have our identity, and unless we commit ourselves consciously to what we are, to our own strengths and weaknesses, our limitations and possibilities, we shall become not Americans, but nobodies.

The creation of a reasonable proportion between Canadian and non-Canadian faculty at our universities is part of that commitment. The latest statistics show that 46% of our university staff is non-Canadian, and that is not a reasonable proportion. The problem presents a different face on different campuses and in different disciplines. Some of the departments particularly sensitive to national values and perspectives are almost 100% American: such is the case, for instance, in history at Loyola College and in political science at MacMaster University. At some campuses the Canadian character of the institution is buried under a preponderance of British professors; and the Quebec universities are confronted with an invasion by teachers from France. If present hiring practices continue this situation will deteriorate further until it reaches the point of no return. There are some who think it has reached that point already.

Perhaps the most important cause that brought us to this pass was the explosive university expansion in the sixties which created a sudden demand for qualified teachers which our graduate schools were unable to meet. This emergency has passed during the last couple of years, except perhaps in a few specialized fields and for a few specific posts. By and large our graduate departments are now capable of supplying enough qualified graduates to meet the demands of our universities, so much so that some of our Ph.D.'s have to make a living driving trucks or working in an insurance office while the positions for which we have trained them at enormous cost to the taxpayer, go to foreign applicants.

Meanwhile our Federal Government lures Americans and Englishmen here by offering them (as well as twelve other nations) a two-year income tax exemption just for coming here. This means that we actually spend millions of dollars annually to make non-Canadians financially more competitive in our own academic job-market than our own people whom we have spent hundreds of millions of dollars preparing precisely for the positions we are promoting others to take. Actually, the two-year income tax ex-

emption is given on condition that the person applying intends to stay only two years in Canada, but no American or Englishman I know has ever failed to take advantage of it though he had every intention of staying longer than two years. With their left hand they sign a declaration that they intend to stay two years only, while their right hand signs the contract for a permanent appointment. The least that can be said is that such conduct is immoral, and the government should be enjoined to take action to recover some of this money which was obtained under false pretenses and which has given an unfair advantage particularly to U.S. and U.K. citizens over Canadians applying for positions at Canadian universities.

The fact that by far the largest contingent, namely 44.4% of all non-Canadians hired in 1969, were from the U.S. has to do partly with physical propinquity, and partly with the fact that Americans, generally speaking, are more pushy than Canadians. Where they have moved into departments they have often proved to be Trojan horses opening the gates for a veritable flood of fellow-Americans, sometimes from the same state and college. It is all done under the awesome banner of 'academic excellence'. Much is made of this by those who wish to justify or rationalize their hiring practices. Excellence, we are told, must be the chief criterion for the hiring of academic staff. Unfortunately, excellence is not a criterion unless you have a criterion for excellence, and there lies the rub. Under U.S. influence and dominance we have come to accept U.S. criteria of excellence which measure by certificates of higher degrees, the Ph.D. in particular, and the publish-or-perish formula. These criteria do not correspond with our own traditions, and, what is worse, they do not guarantee or even document excellence. Any random sampling of American professors at any of our universities will show that there are good ones and bad ones, and an awful lot of mediocre ones in between — much the same picture and proportions, probably, that one would find at any university anywhere. But how good it all looks on paper! Like the man the University of Victoria in B.C. hired for president a couple of years ago. A committee of 18 sedate academics, 17 of them Canadians, scoured the English-speaking world for the most excellent man and found him in the United States — a man well accoutred with all the requisite higher degrees of learning. Much to everyone's embarrassment, however, it turned out a year or so after he had been appointed that he had been awarded his prestigious LL.B. and his Doctor of Jurisprudence from a one-room one-man correspondence school in Chicago known for its sale of fake academic degrees.

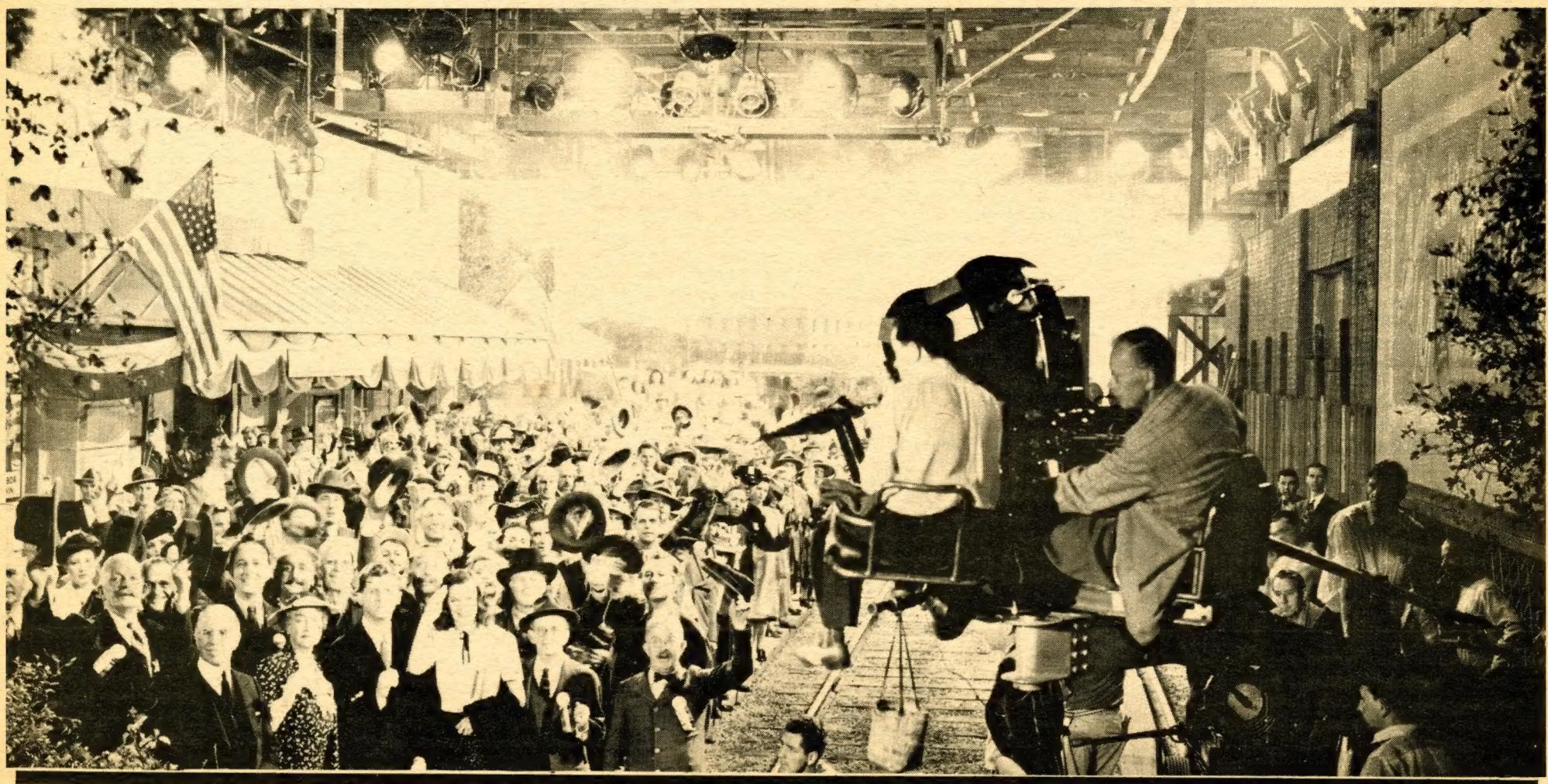
The point is that paper criteria establish paper excellence, no more, and so long as we use American standards of excellence we shall go on hiring an increasing number of Americans.

To ask that an overwhelming majority of our university staff be Canadian citizens does not mean to promote racial discrimination. Every landed immigrant is free, after his residence years, to be or not to be a Canadian. So are we, whether native or naturalised, who hold Canadian passports already. We must make the choice and then live with the consequences.

STAR GENT PRESTON:

Preston Sturges comments on mother love, the US marines, and the nervous respect paid by civilians to the returning combat veteran in

"Hail the Conquering Hero," part of the Conservatory of Cinematographic Art's Sturges festival October 28-30.



SGWU THIS WEEK

thursday 21

WORKING WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION: Meeting 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. in the secretarial lounge, 7th floor, Hall Building; topic "Secretarial salaries."

FRENCH 201 - SECTION TV: Cable TV's channel 9 at 7:30 and 10:30 a.m., 10:30 p.m.

CONSERVATORY OF CINEMATOGRAPHIC ART: "Simon of the Desert" (Luis Bunuel, 1965) (Spanish with English subtitles) with Claudio Brook and Silvia Pinal at 4:15 p.m.; "Compulsion" (Richard Fleischer, 1958) with Orson Welles, Diane Varsi and Dean Stockwell at 7 p.m.; "Crack in the Mirror" (Richard Fleischer, 1960) with Orson Welles, Juliette Greco and Alexander Knox at 9 p.m. in H-110; 50¢ students, 75¢ non-students.

GALLERY I: Exhibition of prints by British artist Richard Hamilton, on loan from the National Gallery of Canada, until Oct. 29.

WEISSMAN GALLERY & GALLERY II: Graduate students exhibition (Georges Baier, Barbara H. Battelle, Ilze Berzins, Jacques Albert Wallot), until Nov. 4.

UKRAINIAN CLUB: Meeting at 4:15 p.m. in H-1137.

friday 22

ENGINEERING FACULTY COUNCIL: Meeting at 2:30 p.m. in H-769.

GERMAN CLUB: Films at 7:30 p.m. in H-420.

GEORGIAN SKY DIVERS: Meeting at 5:30 p.m. in H-635.

ARAB STUDENTS ASSOCIATION: Meeting at 2 p.m. in H-937.

GEORGIAN FILM SOCIETY: "Catch 22" (Mike Nichols, 1970) with everyone and his brother at 7 p.m. (50¢) and 9:30 p.m. (\$1) in H-110.

saturday 23

FOOTBALL: Loyola vs Sir George at Loyola, 2 p.m.

SOCCER: C.M.R. vs Sir George at St. Jean, 2 p.m.

GEORGIAN HELLENIC ASSOCIATION: Seminar on "Social-Economic Situation in Greece" with guest speaker Dr. A. Papandreou, leader of the Hellenic Liberation Movement and professor of economics at York University, at 1:30 p.m. in H-110.

ARAB STUDENTS ASSOCIATION: Meeting at 2 p.m. in H-937.

GEORGIAN FILM SOCIETY: "Cromwell" (Ken Hughes, 1970) with Richard Harris and Alec Guinness at 7 p.m. (50¢) and 9:30 p.m. (\$1) in H-110.

sunday 24

SCIENCE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION: "Wait Until Dark" (Frank Oppenheimer, 1967) with Audrey Hepburn and Efram Zimbalist Jr. at 3, 5:30 and 8:30 p.m. in H-110; 75¢.

monday 25

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL ON STUDENT LIFE: Meeting in H-769 at 5 p.m.

GALLERY I: Exhibition and sale of original etchings, woodcuts and lithographs by Picasso, Baskin, Anuszkiewicz, Daumier, Kollwitz, Goya and many others, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. through tomorrow.

tuesday 26

GEORGIAN PLAYERS: Auditions for Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" in H-341 from 6 to 9 p.m.

Photos and notices of coming events should be in by Wednesday noon for Thursday publication (basement, 2145 Mackay) or call Maryse Perraud, 879-2823.

FRENCH 201 - SECTION TV: Cable TV's channel 9 at 7:30 and 10:30 a.m., 10:30 p.m.

wednesday 27

S.G.W.U. CHRISTIAN SCIENCE: Gieth Plimmer speaks at 4 p.m. in H-413.

thursday 28

SIR GEORGE BAHAI ASSOCIATION: Meeting at 5 p.m. in H-613.

FRENCH 201 - SECTION TV: Cable TV's channel 9 at 7:30 p.m. and 10:30 a.m., 10:30 p.m.

CONSERVATORY OF CINEMATOGRAPHIC ART: "Easy Living" (Mitchell Leisen, 1937) with Ray Milland, Jean Arthur and William Demarest at 7 p.m.; "Christmas in July" (Preston Sturges, 1940) with Dick Powell and Ellen Drew at 9 p.m. in H-110; 50¢ students, 75¢ non-students.

notice

GARNET KEY SOCIETY: November 1-5 is nomination week; forms available in H-340 or on the mezzanine.

ISSUES & EVENTS

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